

OBITUARY

FRED T. THORNE (1909-1994)

The world of lepidopterists, especially those interested in the butterflies of southwestern North America, lost a great friend and accomplished lepidopterist in the passing of Fred T. Thorne on 29 April 1994. At the age of 84, he was a charter and sustaining member of the Lepidopterists' Society, and served in key positions in that Society as well as many other professional and amateur entomological groups.

Fred Thorne was born on 25 June 1909 in Casper, Wyoming. He moved to San Diego County in southern California as a youngster, eventually marrying Dorothy Mary Argo in 1931. They established their residence on a hill overlooking El Cajon, a suburb east of San Diego. Fred attended San Diego State College from 1937 to 1941, but did not complete the degree program. He then worked from 1946-1964 as an entomologist and Deputy Agricultural Commissioner for San Diego County. He later served as Museum Entomologist at the San Diego Natural History Museum from 1972-1975 following the retirement of Charles F. Harbison.

Fred joined the Lepidopterists' Society as a charter member in 1947 and remained a sustaining member throughout his life. In 1958, he became the First Vice President of the Society, and served as a member of the Executive Council during 1967-1969. His most notable contribution to the Society was his service on the Journal's Editorial Committee from 1957-1969. He was Associate Editor from 1957 to 1966 and developed one of the most popular sections of the Journal for amateur and professionals alike, a quarterly feature called "Especially for Collectors." He actively sought contributions from those who had made interesting collecting trips within the United States and abroad, and also developed articles featuring life history and behavioral notes, for this section. Fred also served as the Zone One Season Summary Coordinator from 1961 through 1968. He was one of the key activists on the Program Committees for the Pacific Slope Section of the Lepidopterists' Society, planning annual meeting programs for 1954, 1955, 1956, 1960, 1965, and 1969. He also served on the Program Committee for the national Society meetings in 1953 and 1962. In addition to his activities in the Lepidopterists' Society, Fred was active in the Entomological Society of America, the Lepidoptera Research Foundation, the Lorquin Entomological Society (in Los Angeles), and Los Entomologos (in San Diego), and was elected a Fellow of the San Diego Natural History Museum. Fred's extensive collection of over 9,000 butterflies was donated to the museum's Entomology Department in



FIGS. 1-3. Fred Thorne. 1, San Diego, California, 1928; 2, Grand Canyon, Arizona, 1935; 3, El Cajon, California, 1971.

1973, and the San Diego Society of Natural History unanimously elected him a patron of the museum in 1976.

Fred is best remembered by his multitude of friends for his warm and friendly personality. He invited many younger collectors to go with him on field trips over the years, and one always learned an amazing amount from such experiences in the desert or mountains of San Diego

County. He published a number of papers on southern California species, but probably his most notable contribution was on the distribution and biology of San Diego's endemic Hermes' copper, *Lycaena hermes* (published in 1963 in the *Journal of Research on the Lepidoptera* 2:143-150). He also published notable papers on the Catalina Island endemic hairstreak, *Strymon avalona*, and the small blue, *Philotiella speciosa* (Lycaenidae), in the Mojave Desert. He loved to rear Lepidoptera and gave a considerable amount of living material to John Adams Comstock for description in Comstock's life history papers. Fred's publications appeared in the *Bulletin of the Southern California Academy of Sciences*, *Journal of Research on the Lepidoptera*, *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society*, *Los Entomologos*, *The Mid-Continent Lepidoptera Series*, and in various popular articles. Fred also was the contributor of accounts of several lycaenid genera in William Howe's classic *Butterflies of North America*.

Much of his careful work on life histories of *Euphydryas editha quino* (Nymphalidae) populations in San Diego County, as well as *Papilio* species (Papilionidae) and the giant skippers (Megathymidae), *Megathymus* and *Agathymus*, in the desert areas of southern California and Baja California remains unpublished, although Charles Harbison used much of Thorne's material to describe two new species of *Agathymus* from Baja California, *A. stephensi* and *A. comstocki*. Fred's interests in, and rearing of, the genus *Mitoura* (Lycaenidae) led to the description of the patronym *Mitoura thornei*, endemic to Otay Mountain in southern San Diego County.

Wherever Fred is right now in the great hereafter, we can envision him pursuing diminutive orange-tips or blues across the desert floor and carefully showing his companions how to identify and handle specimens in the field. Back at the car, we can see him writing up his detailed field notes and showing us how to store material for proper curation later. And we can even expect to see in the mail, perhaps tomorrow, another handwritten letter from him thanking the recipient for sending an interesting note or article for the Field Collector section of the journal, perhaps with some gently-made corrections and suggested changes (which one would never dream of rejecting, because they seem so apt and gracefully suggested). Surely Fred Thorne's legacy lives on in the lives of such well-known western lepidopterists as Ray E. Stanford, Oakley Shields, John Brown, and many others who grew up in San Diego exposed to his help and guidance. He will be sorely missed.

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Received and accepted for publication 21 January 1995.